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## ABSTRACT

Recent educational policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels, coupled with the current economic crisis, will have a significant impact on the nature of program evaluation and on the emphasis placed upon it, according to the authors of this report. The document describes the evaluation requirements contained in the three chapters of the federal Education Consolidation and Improvement Act and asserts upon analysis of the law that needs assessemnt, program implementation evaluation, descriptive evaluation, management evaluation, cost effectiveness, outcome evaluation, and sustained gain evaluation components should be incorporated into state and local education agencies' programs. Assuming that the costs and information yields of these processes will determine their value, the authors assess the likelihood of their adoption under various conditions. After noting some major trends in evaluation, including increased utilization of evaluation and qualitative methodology, and a tendency to adapt methods from such disciplines as journalism, philosophy, and business, the document concludes with predictions regarding evaluation policy and practice during the 1980's. These predictions include reduced emphasis on large-scale summative evaluations and program evaluations, failure of the trend toward qualitative evaluation, increased use of auditing methods, and a growing emphasis on new electronic technology. (Author/PGD)

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EVALUATION IN THE EIGHTIES:  
A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

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A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

That many changes are occurring in the field of education, is self evident. In the recent past the entire educational establishment has been subjected to strong challenges to its philosophy, economics, policy and organizational structure. These challenges have resulted in profound changes from the highest levels of organization down to the classroom. At the federal level we have seen the creation of a cabinet level Department of Education and its proposed abolishment. We have witnessed massive cuts in the allocations for federal programs designed to serve the educational needs of diverse special populations, with promises of even further cuts in the future. We have experienced sweeping policy reform as the "new federalism" has been installed, manifesting itself through block grant legislation throughout the human services and educational fields. To compound matters, all of these changes are occurring during an era widely acknowledged as the worst economic crisis period since the great depression of the 1930s. Rampant inflation coupled with a deepening recession has created severe financial problems for school districts and state education departments who must depend primarily on local taxation for the resources to operate their systems.

Woven into the fabric of the new political philosophy is a strong thread of fiscal conservatism that demands increased fiscal accountability. Faced with the dual threat of inflation and reduced levels of funding, legislators and policy makers at local, state and federal levels have an increased need for accurate and timely information about the costs and effectiveness of the educational programs for which they are providing support.

Since the advent of large scale federal assistance programs in education in the mid-sixties, evaluation has played a major role in providing information to policy makers regarding program effectiveness. The history of educational program evaluation however, has been characterized by failure to live up to the expectations many held for it. For a variety of reasons, too numerous and complex to discuss here, evaluation has not proven effective as a major tool for the improvement of education. One of the commonly cited problem areas is lack of utilization of the evaluation studies that are conducted. We will examine this issue more closely in a subsequent section of this paper.

#### EFFECTS OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION ON EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Changes in educational legislation are having a profound effect on educational policy at state and local levels. An examination of the effects of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (ECIA or Public Law 97-35) can provide us with some basis for predicting the types of evaluation activities we might expect to see in the near future. This law, consisting of three chapters, contains new features regarding evaluation and reporting requirements for LEAs and SEAs. Chapter I is a somewhat simplified version of the old Title I retaining

the basic intent and program structure of its predecessor. Chapter II consolidates 29 other categorical aid programs into one Block Grant. Chapter III contains "general provisions" pertaining to Chapters I and II. One stated intent of the new law is to "reduce the administrative and paperwork burden" therefore the requirements for maintenance of effort, supplement--not supplant, and comparability of services of the old Title I are simplified for Chapter I. Before passage of P.L. 97-35, SEAs were required to follow federal formulas and regulations regarding allocation of funds, student selection, reporting requirements, and in the case of Title I, evaluation methodology. Under the new law, responsibility for determining educational needs and setting priorities for allocations, and for defining, implementing and evaluating their programs within the block grant, will be shifted to the LEA level. In addition, LEAs will exercise control over at least 80 percent of the funds allocated under Chapter II.

The law contains specific evaluation and reporting requirements for LEAs and SEAs. In addition to these explicit needs, there are other evaluative, record keeping and reporting needs implied at the local and state levels.

#### Information and Reporting Needs Under P.L. 97-35

##### Local Needs

Each LEA is required to file an application with the SEA for a period not to exceed three years, but subject to annual updating. The LEA application has four basic components, (1) allocation plan (to include private schools), (2) compliance assurances (including equitable participation of private schools), (3) agreement to keep records for fiscal audit and program evaluation as required by state, (4) provision

for systematic consultation with parents, administrative personnel and other appropriate groups. Sub-chapter A of Chapter II provides for the improvement of basic skills instruction. This sub-chapter contains specific requirements for diagnostic assessment, testing and school level evaluation. It also authorizes activities aimed at improving the planning, management and implementation of educational programs.

#### State Needs

Each state education agency is also required to submit an application at least triennially, (which may be amended annually), containing seven components: (1) designation of the SEA as the agency responsible for administration and supervision of the consolidated programs; (2) establishment of an advisory council, appointed by the Governor to advise the SEA on allocation of funds for state functions (20% maximum), formula for allocation of funds to LEAs (80% minimum), planning, development, support, implementation and evaluation of state programs; (3) detailed allocation plan for the 20 percent state share including private schools and administration; (4) provision for public notice and dissemination of all information regarding points included in (2) and (3) above; (5) provision for annual evaluation and public reporting of the effectiveness of consolidated programs beginning in 1984; (6) provision for keeping records and information "required by the Secretary" for fiscal audit and program evaluation; (7) assurances of compliance with consolidation requirements.

#### Implicit Requirements and Needs

While the intent of P.L. 97-35 is to reduce the administrative and paperwork burden on the LEAs and SEAs, there is still a substantial

requirement for collecting, organizing, interpreting and reporting information. Whereas in the past federal regulations have stipulated more specifically, the type of information required, the evaluation specifications of the new law will not be enforced by regulation. However, draft regulations of a fairly general type have been published. The evaluation requirement for Chapter I is greatly reduced in the new regulations. It is that

"An LEA ... shall, at least once every three years, conduct an evaluation of its Chapter I project that includes

- (a) Objective measurements of educational achievement in basic skills, and
- (b) A determination of whether improved performance is sustained over a period more than one year. (Section 200.54)

There are no specific evaluation or reporting requirements stated for the SEA. A handbook is being prepared for SEAs and LEAs containing nonbinding guidelines for areas not specifically covered by the regulations.

The lack of specific binding evaluation regulations and the need for systematic data collection and reporting can be viewed as either advantageous or disadvantageous as a matter of perspective. One disadvantage is that SEAs may have to define their own roles without the federal guidance they have come to depend on. On the advantageous side, these features have two major benefits: (1) they accomplish the desired result of reducing the federally required paperwork burden and (2) they can provide SEAs and LEAs with a new flexibility and create an opportunity structure for the application of newly emerging methodologies in evaluation and reporting. At the local level this flexibility is

accompanied by new responsibilities for determining educational needs and establishing program priorities based on those needs.

#### The Council of Chief State School Officers Response

A special task force was formed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Committee on Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS), to review the evaluation requirements of the new law and make recommendations to the CCSSO regarding the types of evaluation most appropriate for Chapters I and II. The task force met on December 18, 1981 and issued an interim report in which they recorded their beliefs regarding evaluation. The CEIS task force formulated five "beliefs" regarding ECIA-81, which in their view should undergird any evaluation efforts.

1. The evaluation efforts should be appropriate to the scope and nature of the activity being evaluated. Chapter I being larger and more focused lends itself well to a summative, aggregative approach. Chapter II, on the other hand, is much smaller and more diverse, requiring, therefore, a variety of approaches.
2. The evaluation approaches taken should be suggestive and not required for the states. Every effort should be made to encourage LEAs to collect data commensurate with the needs of the SEA.
3. The SEAs and LEAs should make every effort to collect those data for programs supported by both chapters which will insure that the federal funds have been well spent and that the states have been accountable.
4. The overall methodology of the Title I evaluation and reporting system (TIERS) is adequate and should be maintained for Chapter I with some modifications.
5. The evaluation of Chapter II should address two questions immediately:
  1. How effectively has the spirit of the block granting been implemented at state and local levels, and (2) to what extent does the block grant funding meet the criterial needs appropriate to Chapter II which have been identified by the states and local school districts? ... A subsequent evaluation question would deal with the educational impact ...

The CEIS task force produced three separate sets of suggestions for the evaluation of Chapter II, one each for impact evaluation, evaluation of congruence between Chapter II programs and SEA/LEA needs and evaluation of Chapter II implementation. These three areas would appear to foreshadow the types of evaluation activity deemed most appropriate by this important group of state level evaluators.

#### Emerging Trends in Evaluation

Our analysis of the new law combined with the CEIS task force views, reveal to us a set of emerging needs in the area of evaluation.

- o LEAs will need to identify their own local educational needs and establish priorities for funding based on those needs. (Needs assessment)
- o LEAs will need to learn how to conduct evaluation studies that address questions regarding the operation of programs for purposes of making in-course corrections. (Implementation evaluation)
- o LEAs and SEAs will need to develop systems for collecting, maintaining and retrieving data on program costs, participation levels and extent. (Descriptive evaluation)
- o LEA and SEA evaluators will need to learn to work more directly and effectively with project managers and decision makers in a helping-consulting role to assure that programs proceed in a way consistent with their objectives. (Management evaluation)
- o LEAs and SEAs will need to more effectively delineate the relationship of program costs to program outcomes. (Cost effectiveness)
- o LEAs and SEAs will continue to need to evaluate program outcomes. (Impact or outcome evaluation)
- o LEAs will need to report on their success in maintaining improved performance. (Sustained gains)

The extent to which any particular evaluative data need or combination of needs presents itself, will be in part a function of SEA policy making with respect to the new law and its interpretation. Our experience in providing technical assistance in evaluation has brought us

in contact with each of these needs and has led to the development of methods and materials for the provision of support to SEAs and LEAs in these need areas.

Recently, the TACs have begun to combine techniques from other disciplines such as policy analysis, management consulting and cost analysis with traditional and nontraditional evaluation techniques to expand the scope and increase the effectiveness of technical assistance efforts in evaluation and reporting. This trend has begun to emerge in direct response to SEA and LEA concerns over the lack of relevancy and utility of some of the more traditional approaches.

#### Types of Evaluation Most Applicable to SEA and LEA Needs

Our experience in providing technical assistance in support of TIERS has taught us that the traditional concept of impact evaluation while valuable for determining project effectiveness in a global sense, is severely limited in terms of serving the continuous, decision making needs of educators. Program evaluation based on outcome measures such as achievement tests, can provide gross level information about the overall effectiveness of a program, but is of limited value in terms of making program improvements. For this reason, we have focused our attention more recently on the concept of evaluating program implementation. In this approach classroom teachers, project leaders and school building principals are being trained in methods of documentation, data collection, interpretation and application of results to improve the education process as it is taking place.

We are also now bringing evaluation directly into the classroom by training teachers in techniques of pupil assessment and classroom observation for time-on-task monitoring. These techniques are expected

to have direct benefits to the teachers in improving classroom management. By providing teachers with evaluative tools over which they have direct control, we hope to create a more direct link between evaluation and instruction, thus bringing evaluative techniques to bear on the instructional process at the most effective point in the process.

Cost analysis will likely become a critical feature of evaluation under the new legislation. This is obviously so, because of the increased emphasis on fiscal accounting as mentioned earlier. We have begun developing cost analysis techniques and working with SEAs and LEAs in their application. In this effort we are drawing on the works of Henry Levin at Stanford, as well as others. Much remains to be done in this area but the interest level among SEAs is high and there is some promise of future payoff for current efforts.

Advanced technology, and in particular the Microcomputer, affords education a powerful tool for the collection, storage, manipulation and retrieval of data for more effective decision making. In the Technical Assistance Centers for Title I Evaluation (TAC) we have gained valuable experience in developing data bases and pupil information systems using microcomputers, for LEA clientele. We are also working on using microcomputers with optical scanning equipment to process survey data for needs assessments and similar evaluative survey work.

Matching audience information needs and technical competencies with appropriate reporting and data display techniques is a constant challenge to evaluators. The requirement for public reporting of evaluation results by the LEA and sharing of information with the Governor's advisory council by the SEA will tend to emphasize the need for adaptive reporting techniques matching the audience information needs with

appropriate data presentation methods. The TACs have developed workshops and instructional materials on how to identify the most appropriate reporting method and how to present the necessary information to each audience most effectively. This experience can provide the basis for further advances in the state-of-the-art in reporting techniques.

#### An Analytical Framework for Forecasting

The discussion thus far has focused on the political and economic factors affecting the evaluation and reporting needs of the LEAs and SEAs, and has related some of those needs to the experiences of the Title I TACs in the development of materials and provision of assistance in the evaluation of Title I programs. While needs and experience provide two essential components for predicting evaluation trends, our future view can be somewhat enhanced by applying an analytical framework to the points we have discussed. The framework we have chosen is based on two assumptions: (1) that costs will play a major role in determining the kinds of evaluation services SEAs and LEAs will employ and (2) that the information yield of evaluations will be a critical factor in determining their worth.<sup>1</sup>

In Table 1, we have a comparative analysis of six types of evaluation we have identified as needed, in terms of their relative cost and information yield for Chapters I and II of P.L. 97-35.

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<sup>1</sup>The authors are indebted to Dr. Stephen L. Murray of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory for the suggested application of this framework.

Table 1  
Types of Evaluation vs. Cost and Information Payoff

|                                  | CHAPTER I                                |                                      | CHAPTER II                               |                                      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                  | <u>Relative<br/>Cost per<br/>Student</u> | <u>Payoff</u>                        | <u>Relative<br/>Cost per<br/>Student</u> | <u>Payoff</u>                        |
| Needs<br>Assessment              | Low                                      | Low                                  | High                                     | High                                 |
| Descriptive<br>Evaluation        | Low                                      | High                                 | Low                                      | High                                 |
| Management<br>Evaluation         | Low                                      | Low<br>(District)<br>High<br>(State) | Low                                      | Low<br>(District)<br>High<br>(State) |
| Implementation<br>Evaluation     | High                                     | High<br>(District)<br>Low<br>(State) | High                                     | High<br>(District)<br>Low<br>(State) |
| Program<br>Impact Evaluation     | Low                                      | High                                 | High                                     | Low                                  |
| Cost Effectiveness<br>Evaluation | Low                                      | High                                 | High                                     | Low                                  |

The rationale for our analysis of cost versus payoff for various types of evaluative data is based on two major factors, relative size of program in terms of student enrollment and potential utility of the data. The following examples may serve to illustrate that rationale.

Needs assessment is required for both Chapter I and Chapter II programs. Since the average size of Chapter I projects will be much larger than that of Chapter II projects, the relative cost per student will be lower for Chapter I. The payoff, however, in terms of the potential utility of the data, may be higher for Chapter II than Chapter I because multiple program demands for fewer dollars under Chapter II create pressure for allocation decisions to be data based.

Descriptive evaluation data in the form of frequency counts, demographic statistics and other non-parametric data are relatively inexpensive to collect since they are often available as a by-product of administrative records systems. While the information they yield has limitations for statistical manipulation, it can provide decision makers with an abundance of quick, factual data for responding to board inquiries and public information needs and for analyzing trends.

Management evaluation or the application of management consulting techniques to evaluative problems tends to be more useful in the higher order bureaucracy where outcomes are less product oriented and more emphasis is placed on support services and assistance. This is so because the techniques are less measurement based than some others and rely more on personal interaction and problem solving.

Implementation evaluation is an example of a relatively high cost activity that can have a high payoff under the right conditions. It is more appropriate for LEA than SEA applications since the LEA is the focus of program activity. A decision regarding whether to apply this approach or not might bear consideration if the program in question is based on a substantial resource commitment and is expected to yield strong results. In such cases, effective implementation takes on increased importance and the results of an implementation evaluation may make a critical difference in terms of correcting program deficiencies before the program is termed a failure.

Program impact evaluation will have a relatively low cost where program enrollment is high and a relatively high payoff where a predetermined need for the data has been established (e.g., a federal, state or local requirement).

Cost effectiveness evaluation will tend to have the highest payoff where the total program outlay is largest. This is true, in part, because of the vulnerability of the large program budget to political attack. Since Chapter I projects are larger, on the average than Chapter II, it is most likely to have a high payoff when applied to Chapter I.

#### MAJOR TRENDS AND ISSUES IN EVALUATION

The literature on evaluation has exhibited a few major trends over the past several years. One of these trends has been toward increased utilization of evaluation. Another has involved increased use of so called "qualitative" methodology. We have also seen attempts to apply methods from other disciplines such as journalism, philosophy and business, to educational evaluation. The Research On Evaluation Program at NWREL, under the direction of Dr. Nick Smith, has commissioned the development of evaluation metaphors from many disciplines. This has resulted in some innovative and useful perspectives on evaluation such as Investigative Journalism (Guba, 1981), cost analysis (Levin, 1981) and management consulting (Stanfield, 1981) as alternative approaches to evaluation.

#### Evaluation Utilization

Much of the recent literature has focused on the issue of evaluation utilization (Alkin, Daillak and White, 1979; Patton, 1978). In a recent review of the utilization literature (Hansen, Martin and Oxford, 1981) conducted under our Title I Evaluation TAC contracts at NWREL, we identified four major categories of factors affecting the utility of evaluations: (1) technical-methodological, (2) role related,

(3) communications, and (4) political factors. The first includes problems of design and instrumentation. The second deals with the roles of program managers, evaluators and others involved in or directly affected by the evaluation. The third deals with types of evaluative information and how they are communicated through the evaluation process. The fourth examines the political context as an essential and often neglected factor in all evaluation activities.

#### The Quantitative vs. Qualitative Debate

The utilization issue is at the core of a continuing methodological debate that has split the evaluation community into two opposing camps; one based on adherence to the time worn and revered experimental approach derived from psychology, and the other based on the field study or ethnographic approach of anthropology and sociology. The debate is often, albeit simplistically, characterized as "quantitative vs. qualitative," although this does injustice to both views.

Law (1980) calls for new approaches in three critical areas of evaluation: design, context and use. On the issue of design, Law recognizes the trend away from the quasi-experimental, psychometrically based evaluations of the 1960s and toward more qualitative "functional" evaluation designs as a healthy trend. He expresses concern that the pendulum might swing too far from a purely quantitative to a purely qualitative approach. He calls for "an appropriate balance" of methodology, based on a careful determination of the information needs of the client (page 16).

The quantitative position dominated the field throughout the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, through the works of such authors as Guba (1972), Alkin, et. al (1979) and Rist (1980) and others, we have seen the

emergence of a trend toward a greater reliance on qualitative methodology in educational evaluation. This trend has been perceived by many as the wave of the future and has led to the prediction that there will be a decline in the number of evaluations focusing on achievement outcomes as measured by standardized test scores, yielding to an increase in case studies and other qualitative methods. In our view this prediction cannot be supported by our knowledge of the current political and economic conditions influencing evaluation policy.

#### Management Consulting as Evaluation

Jonathan Stanfield (1981) a management consultant, commissioned by NWREL's Research On Evaluation Project to conduct a management review of evaluation practice at the SEA level concludes that the paradigm for educational evaluation is changing from the "big study" research based methodology born with the evaluation requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to an organization-based function supporting SEA management. Stanfield's rationale includes the observation that "evaluation studies" are often slow, time consuming affairs, which often produce ambiguous or legally challengeable results offering little in the way of policy guidance. Such studies are contrasted with continuous input to program management resulting from data base inquiries. Stanfield points out that the time scale for policy decisions is compressed as the locus for decision shifts from the federal to state or local level. SEA and LEA administrators need data about their programs on a more immediate basis than does congress. One might infer a negative relationship between level of policy decision served, e.g., federal, state, local or school site and immediacy of need. According to Stanfield's analysis, the type of large scale evaluation of

the type funded in the 1960s and 1970s, designed to guide major social policy decisions, will diminish, if not disappear entirely in the future. Stanfield developed his perspective in advance of the advent of P.L. 97-35, based mostly on discussions with key administrators in SEA policy setting positions. The occurrence of block grants in both education and other social service areas would seem to lend support to his views.

The field of management consulting offers the evaluator ways to provide directly relevant information to key decision makers on an ongoing basis. The management consultant functions in a manner very similar to that which we advocate in providing technical assistance. A management consultant will focus on a specific problem area such as productivity, cost or communications and will work directly with decision makers in developing solutions.

#### Accomplishment Auditing<sup>2</sup>

Increased cost consciousness and reduced funds for evaluation may result in an increase in the use of accomplishment auditing as an evaluation activity. With less money available for districts to use for third party or contract evaluations, it may be necessary for program staff to conduct outcome evaluations themselves. The independent accomplishment audit provides a low cost means of improving the quality of these internal evaluations by means of an external review process. The audit serves two basic functions:

1. The auditor's critique of evaluation plans and procedures strengthens the internal evaluation process.

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<sup>2</sup>Based on information provided by the Audit and Evaluation Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Dr. Mark Greene, Director.

2. The auditor's certification of the project evaluation reports lends credibility to the reported outcomes.

The accomplishment audit involves a technical review of evaluation documents, including the evaluation plan and reports as well as onsite reviews of the data collection, tabulation, analysis and reporting activities.

The convergence of the audit approach with the need for fiscal accountability could result in the development of a new professional specialty, that of the auditor-analyst. This new specialist would have a good grounding in both education and accounting. His/her function would be to provide legislators and other funding and policy bodies with information on the soundness of the fiscal data provided by the program manager and the validity of the reported outcomes.

#### Political Awareness

Law (1982) advocates increased evaluator awareness of the political context of evaluations. Evaluators need to become more knowledgeable of the legislative process. They must learn to recognize that all legislation is born of compromise. They need to design evaluation studies that go beyond the mere requirements of the law if they are to be of use to policy makers. Law poses three general evaluation questions of interest to legislators:

1. Are you doing what we told you to do?
2. How well are you doing it?
3. What conditions exist now in program schools that are different from before?

Each question has a number of implications for program management to consider, e.g., is the right population being served; what are examples of success/failure; is there differential impact? Through an

understanding of the political ambience of a program, an evaluator can educate and lead policy makers to a greater appreciation of the information evaluation can provide.

#### THE SEA's PERSPECTIVE

In recent planning discussions with our own SEA clientele we find that views are divided on the SEA's evaluation policy under the new law and that Chapters I and II are indeed being approached quite differently. In most of the 14 states we serve through the Title I TAC, the SEA will continue to require or at least expect LEAs to conduct Chapter I evaluations using the Title I Evaluation and Reporting System. In a few states the SEA will relax the requirement for separation of selection from the pretest with Model A. The prevailing philosophy seems to be that TIERS is producing better quality data than was ever available before and now that the system is in place we might as well keep it.

Section 555 of Chapter I (paragraph b) requires the SEA to keep such records and provide such information to the Secretary as may be required for fiscal audit and program evaluation. A similar clause (Section 556, paragraph b) requires the LEA to provide assurance to the SEA that such records as might be needed for fiscal audit and program evaluation will be kept. Many SEA evaluators and federal projects coordinators are interpreting these statements as an indication that the Secretary will request such data at some point in the future and that the most effective way to respond to such a request would be to continue to collect TIERS data.

There is less clarity at SEA level regarding evaluation policy under Chapter II. Drs. Nick Smith and Darrel Caulley of NWREL are at present conducting a study of SEA and LEA evaluation policy changes in response to Chapter II.<sup>3</sup> Preliminary data from a telephone survey of eight SEA level evaluators and one large district in each of eight states seem to indicate a "wait and see" attitude being adopted. None of the respondents had indicated any changes in evaluation policy toward Chapter II programs from that which preceded Chapter II. It is not at all clear what this means but the researchers believe that a state of confusion exists, at present, regarding evaluation policy for Chapter II.

#### A FUTURE FORECAST

Given the views expressed in recent literature on evaluation trends, our own experiences with Title I and the views of practitioners regarding future SEA and LEA evaluation policy, we would now hazard a forecast of evaluation trends for the next three to five year period. Perhaps the most straightforward, albeit imprecise method of making our forecast would be to estimate the probability of each of the six types of evaluation previously mentioned being applied in a broad scale fashion. These estimates, admittedly subjective, but based on our understanding of the factors currently influencing evaluation practice, are shown in Table 2.

The words High, Medium and Low are used to indicate, in a gross fashion, our "best guess" regarding the probability of application of each of the approaches listed.

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<sup>3</sup>Personal communication.

Table 2  
Probability Assessment of Types of Evaluation

|                               | <u>CHAPTER I</u><br><u>Probability of</u><br><u>Application</u> | <u>CHAPTER II</u><br><u>Probability of</u><br><u>Application</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Needs Assessment              | High                                                            | High                                                             |
| Descriptive Evaluation        | High                                                            | High                                                             |
| Management Evaluation         | Low (District)<br>Low (State)                                   | Low (District)<br>Medium (State)                                 |
| Implementation Evaluation     | High (District)                                                 | Medium (District)<br>Low (State)                                 |
| Program Impact Evaluation     | High                                                            | High                                                             |
| Cost Effectiveness Evaluation | Medium                                                          | Low                                                              |

An examination of Table 2 in combination with Table 1 will reveal our logic in making these predictions. Beginning with needs assessment, the case seems clear. Both Chapters I and II require it, therefore there is a very high probability of needs assessments being conducted, even though costs are relatively high and information payoff is low as shown in Table 1.

Descriptive evaluation, in the form of compilation of demographic data, program descriptions, frequency counts and other data that are easily compiled, stored and retrieved constitutes a low-cost, high-payoff approach for both chapters, and will therefore be of a high probability. This is an area of great potential for the myriad of microcomputers now beginning to appear in schools, district and state offices.

Management evaluation, including the management consulting approach to provide program managers and policy makers with information for on-line decision making will have a relatively low probability of being applied to Chapter I at LEA level and SEA level and a medium probability of application to Chapter II at the state level. As discussed earlier,

most SEAs plan very few changes in evaluation requirements under Chapter I from those of Title I. This means that evaluation studies other than those currently being done with TIERS type data would bear additional costs. Even though management evaluation costs are relatively low compared to other approaches, any additional evaluation costs may be prohibitive in those states where the administrative set aside is being reduced. There may be a slightly higher payoff to SEAs to conduct these types of studies under Chapter II, where program structure is less well defined and priorities for project funding may be in conflict.

Program impact evaluation will be required at both state and local level for both chapters, thus regardless of payoff, it will be conducted, although financial constraints may reduce the size and scope of such efforts. On larger projects with higher academic achievement as the goal, the TIERS or a similar process will likely be applied. Smaller projects and those with less well defined outcomes may use a variety of other approaches to ascertain effects, such as objectives checklists or attitude measures. For the most part however, these will be minimal efforts conducted at low cost.

Cost effectiveness evaluation will, contrary to the rising tide of cost consciousness, not appreciate an overall high probability of application although it may receive relatively more attention under Chapter I than II. Cost effectiveness, as an approach to educational evaluation, remains an esoteric field, practiced by few and understood by even fewer. Levin (1981) and others have made substantive contributions to demystifying this area of endeavor and have developed some straightforward procedures for its application, but there remains a great task to be accomplished in training evaluators in its use and in creating

an awareness of these procedures in the educational community. This is not to say that there will not be an increase in the attempts to collect cost data and in some way link those data to outcomes. We are seeing this occur on a frequent basis now. Application of cost effectiveness evaluation of a rigorous type on a broad scale will be slow in arriving, however.

#### Qualitative Evaluation Methods Re-Examined

The quantitative-qualitative debate continues. Five of the six types of evaluation we have identified as being most appropriate are basically "quantitative." This reflects our view that although qualitative methods have much to offer, conditions are not propitious for their wide spread use in the near future. Evaluators around the country have been subjected to characterizations, sometimes unjustly, of "bean counters" or "fuzzies" depending on whether they viewed themselves as having a primarily quantitative or qualitative orientation. For the time being the bean counters dominate. This condition will likely continue until educational funding and policy constraints are relaxed thus providing the resources and environmental conditions needed to encourage further development and application of qualitative approaches.

We have heard the thunder of the pending storm that threatens to deluge us with ethnographic evaluations. To date, however, we have only received a light sprinkle. Where is the deluge? What appeared a few years ago to be the evaluation zeitgeist, now appears as less than the true spirit. Qualitative evaluations, generally speaking but with noted exceptions, tend to be costly. When evaluation funds were in good supply there was cause for hope that ethnography and other non-psychometric approaches to evaluation would gain wider acceptability. Now, however,

in an era of fiscal conservatism, the costs of conducting an evaluation study must stand the challenge of comparison against the potential for effecting an improvement in a social program. This is a very difficult challenge and the (labor) intensive ethnography cannot, except in rare cases, meet the challenge. Other types of qualitative studies such as the management consultant approach or implementation evaluation have a much better chance of succeeding since they have as intended outcomes the improvement of the educational process at only a slight cost to the project. This is especially true in the case of management evaluation, where there is very little new or original data collection required.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Many recent changes in educational policy have influenced the types of evaluation we can expect to see practiced in the near future. The primary channels through which these changes are occurring are legislative and economic. Legislatively, the major influence is the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981. Economically, LEAs and SEAs are caught in a bind between local initiatives to reduce taxes and rising inflation.

Evaluation as a discipline has been severely criticized for its failure to be as effective a force for educational improvement as many had hoped. Over time, certain trends have emerged in evaluation resulting in an increased tendency toward qualitative methodology and away from the strong roots of experimentalism and quantitative methodology. The political, philosophical, legislative and economic factors of recent years have slowed, if not stopped the qualitative trend.

In this paper we have reviewed the block grant legislation for the evaluation needs and implications it presents for both LEAs and SEAs. We

have applied our own experience in the areas of evaluation, technical assistance and research to draw inferences about the types of evaluation activities SEAs and LEAs will be most likely to need. By examining all of these factors, we have arrived at the following conclusions regarding evaluation policy and practice during the 1980's.

1. Because of reduced funding levels and lack of policy support for evaluation, large scale summative evaluations of the type conducted in the 1960s and early 1970s will not be conducted on the same scale.
2. The major factor influencing evaluation policy and practice in the 1980s will be economics. Evaluation methods that offer high information pay off at relatively low cost will increase in use. This may result in an increase of management oriented studies based on techniques derived from management consulting. In this same vein, educational accomplishment audits may increase in popularity relative to third party evaluations. A combination of outcome audit and financial audit could be a logical result of the need for fiscal accountability and outcome validation. This could result in a new role for the evaluator, that of auditor-analyst.
3. Qualitative approaches to evaluation such as ethnography, case studies and other methodologies involving intensive use of skilled professional labor for extended periods of time, will not be widely used due to their relatively high costs. This is likely despite the long and widely acclaimed trend toward the use of such methodology.
4. The requirement for program impact evaluation remains for both Chapters I and II of ECIA-81. The new law, however, provides fewer prescriptive requirements and affords greater flexibility in the ways in which programs are evaluated and data are reported by LEAs and SEAs. In those SEAs and LEAs where evaluation systems are well established and seem to be working effectively, few changes in methods and reporting procedures will occur. In states where there has been a strong "compliance orientation" the relaxing of requirements and weakened regulations will result in token evaluation efforts.
5. Finally, although not dealt with extensively in this paper, technology will play an increasingly important role in evaluation activities. The microcomputer has brought powerful data manipulation capabilities within reach of virtually every school building. As teachers, evaluators and administrators seek ways to make the best use of this technology, we may see a quiet revolution take place in the application of microcomputers in evaluation.

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